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22 February 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Communications

FROM: [REDACTED]

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OC Representative, DDA Emergency Planning Group

SUBJECT: Snow Emergency

1. The DDA tasked the Emergency Planning Group to prepare an analysis of the Directorate's performance during the snow crisis of 11-14 February. What follows was gleaned from an office-wide query on 16 February. [REDACTED]

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2. Summary - The recent snow emergency did not pose any significant problems for the Office of Communications. All 24-hour facilities were sufficiently staffed, and there were no interruptions to primary or back-up communications networks, links, microwave, telephone, or secure voice circuits. Although some people were inconvenienced in varying degrees, there were no severe personnel, security, or medical emergencies. Employee response was generally excellent, above and beyond the call in many cases. Following is a general chronology of events. [REDACTED]

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3. Instructions - Weather emergency instructions are published in the 24-hour facilities as standard procedures and are required reading for all employees. Since there was plenty of warning for this storm, discussions and updates were conducted earlier in the week. When the storm broke, those people identified as "essential" were either on board or called in according to instructions. All necessary stations and facilities throughout the area of the storm were either manned or closed as necessary. [REDACTED]

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4. Personnel - All facilities were properly and adequately staffed. Personnel in the 24-hour facilities, for the most part, reported for work prepared to stay as long as necessary, knowing they might not be relieved on schedule. Many of the personnel who became stranded acted as replacements for those on duty. Relief was generally not available until various times on Saturday, depending upon location. At the training center, for example,

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portions of two conference groups remained until Saturday after unsuccessfully attempting to leave Friday morning. At most of the outbuildings in the metropolitan area, the entire buildings were vacated on Friday when word was received to send people home. However, there were some people stranded at Headquarters building and at [redacted]. In outlying areas, four-wheel drive vehicles were stopped by huge drifts across the roads, and relief was not possible until the situation improved late Saturday. [redacted]

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5. Food - Food was available in various quantities. The Communications Watch Officer (CWO) at Headquarters building made early arrangements with the cafeteria manager to have some food prepared and in place for approximately 30 watchstanders. Additionally, the CWO ordered two cases of dry rations from the [redacted]. The cafeteria arrangements were later negated by Office of Security personnel. The dry rations were distributed and quickly exhausted due to the number of people at Headquarters. The dry rations were considered to be not very desirable for people working under the conditions that existed. At various vending machines at Headquarters and the outbuildings, food was available in various quantities. Most watchstanders were able to rely on other personnel going out to the 7-11 in their own four-wheel drive vehicles for whatever was available on Saturday morning. There were reports that the food in the cafeteria was eventually used, and that the Executive Dining Room opened for Saturday morning breakfast. Neither facility was used by Communications personnel. At the training center, GSI personnel remained on duty and manned the dining hall for those personnel stranded or aboard for duty. Food supplies there were sufficient throughout the storm. [redacted]

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6. Medical - There were no reported medical emergencies, nor was any medical assistance required throughout the period of the storm. One employee was reported to have experienced a fall in the [redacted] parking lot enroute to his vehicle on Friday which resulted in some painful bruises. One Headquarters employee was released to go home on Friday to attend to his wife, who was expecting momentarily. With the onset of heavy pains on Saturday, he and his wife walked two blocks through heavy snow to a waiting four-wheel drive vehicle for transportation to the hospital. She delivered within 20 minutes after arrival. [redacted]

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7. Travel - Most personnel who tried to get work early Friday morning made it. Many who left after being excused had to turn back, or became stranded on the way home. Personnel reporting

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for work during the height of the storm fared in varying degrees, many becoming stranded on the way in, and once here, in and around the building complex. The Headquarters Motor Pool offered excellent assistance to some essential people; transporting some to and from McLean, Falls Church, Arlington, Ft. Myer, and Annandale, helping to dig out cars, etc. At other times, they could not furnish necessary transportation for other essential personnel, nor did they furnish drivers for all their four-wheel drive vehicles. 25X1

8. Facilities - Sleeping facilities and general quarters were available and extensively utilized [redacted] 25X1  
At the outbuildings there were no cots or blankets, so sofas were used where available. At Headquarters, cots, blankets, and pillows were generally available, were issued in a timely manner, and were utilized to good advantage by rotating watch groups. 25X1

9. Security - There were no known or reported security problems or incidents because of the snow emergency. [redacted] 25X1

10. Snow Removal - Initially, snow removal at and around the Headquarters building appeared limited. At [redacted] 25X1  
the contractor at first refused to plow, and many cars were stuck in the roadway. At the training center, plowing was extensive depending on available equipment; even some of the approach roads were plowed by station equipment. Overall, it appeared that the worse the storm became, the more gates were closed and transportation became bogged down. When some people tried to leave on Saturday and Sunday, their cars were plowed under and they had no way to shovel out. In other cases, the motor pool was able to assist some personnel by blowing, plowing, or helping them dig their cars out of the snow. [redacted] 25X1

11. Conclusions - The initial decision requiring federal workers to report for duty caused many unexpected problems. Within the Office of Communications, however, everything went generally very well. There was excellent response from personnel; they came prepared for the most part, and where they were caught short or inconvenienced, they proved extremely adaptable and flexible. There was genuine widespread concern for fellow beings expressed in many ways. The success of our operations during the storm was due primarily to the ingenuity, dedication, and perseverance of the personnel involved and they should certainly be commended. Food and accommodations were available in various measures.

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The motor pool assistance was excellent - invaluable in some cases, and in other, lacking for want of additional resources. Operationally, all circuits remained up and service was transparently "business as usual."

12. My Recommendations - There should be one central Agency emergency authority, properly staffed, coordinating all administrative activities during such crises. Well advertised, all other personnel would know who to call and where to go for assistance. All Agency administrative facilities should be under that person's authority and responsibility for the duration of the emergency. Snow-plowing assistance should be augmented through the use of contractors, military, private vehicles, etc. Food and cafeteria service should be made available in a more organized manner. Some type of central announcement facility should be made available to all who are in the building at the time of an emergency. One suggestion here is to use the unclassified grid that extends throughout the building for the installation of speakers on each floor and in strategic locations, so that the central authority could disseminate needed information to anyone in the building. Consideration should be given to opening the West Lot and Parkway gates, and keeping them open with plows etc., to ensure a maximum availability of exits for cars. The lever gate at [ ] should be manned and kept open. Automatic operation of this gate caused many cars to become stuck; many employees became stranded, and the contractor refused to plow.

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